taken which did not owe their origin immediately to Rome, though perhaps in nearly all cases executed by Greek artists. The Romans even collected and exhibited works of Greek art at Rome *within* a century after the death of Alexander, as the works brought by Marcellus from Syracuse, 214 B.C.

Under these circumstances we may, perhaps, safely term this period of decline—that is, from Marcellus to Constantine the Great—about five centuries—the Roman period of Greek art. We cannot call the art of these centuries Roman art, but it was strictly Greek art under Roman influence, and its chief monuments, even in the Oriental provinces, were raised by the orders of Roman Governors or Emperors, —as at Petra, Palmyra, Baalbec (Heliopolis), Athens, Pola, and Spalatro.

The decline, then, which characterises this remarkable period is not one of poverty, but rather of luxury; it was an embarrassment of riches—an injudicious application of ornament, from the want of that proper discrimination which we term taste, or rather, perhaps, that want combined with the ostentatious rivalry of a luxurious age. And yet, with all its enterprise and boundless expenditure, this age has added but one single new form to those which constituted the elementary types of the preceding age. This new form is *the shell*, which we find cut on the modillions of the arch of Titus, at Rome. This species of net-work is not new. Net-work of gold was introduced largely in the funeral car of Alexander the Great: it appears to be a mere imitation of basket-work, or what it literally is, net-work. We have in this period, also, vertical reeding, rare in Greek art, unless in furniture.

Style and system may be looked upon as synonymous terms in ornamental art. Besides the ornaments themselves, we must have some system of applying them. And if the prominent and characteristic members of certain established styles are promiscuously thrown together, the principal features of one style applied as secondary to subordinate features of another, the value of all is diminished or lost, and the general effect has but its vagueness to characterise it. The same ornamental types may be used in the development of new styles, distinction of style depending not so much on the types themselves as on the mode of using them. But in the development of any particular historic style of ornament, we are strictly limited to the elements belonging to that style; and in combining styles, the various members belonging to the same style should preserve their relative degree of importance.

The general decorations of the Roman period, however, and especially those of Pompeii, exhibit an utter disregard of these observances; and thus all distinctions of style and consequent peculiarities of character are lost.

Systematic designing exhibits the art of the ornamentist in a highly intellectual light. Whatever style prevailed in a particular period, it is one expression of the spirit of that age; and by thus attending to these periodic or local developments of ornament, the designer affords not only the delight and gratification arising from the contemplation of a beautiful work of art, but at the same time presents an agreeable and instructive record of the past, full of the most valuable suggestions.

These remarks apply as much to furniture as to decoration, and also, though in a less degree, to designs for costume and ornamental manufactures. For unless the designer for cabinet work, papers, furniture damasks, and stuffs generally, conforms as much as the decorator with the distinctions of style, these manufactures cannot contribute anything towards that complete developement of ornamental art which it is the object of these schools to foster. There is perhaps only one department of manufactures in which this discrimination of the various styles of ornament can be considered a matter of indifference,—that is in the printed or woven fabrics for ladies' dresses. Here it should rather be avoided, as we do not wish to see our mothers, wives, and daughters look like antiques, or even as middle age ladies. For this class of fabrics, the most appropriate design is such as shall be completely unobtrusive, and while ornamental, at same time strictly subordinate. To make so conspicuous a design as to attract the attention from the lady herself to the pattern of her dress is to commit a capital error: it then no longer adorns but rivals the person. This elaboration of an accessary at the cost of the principal object, is an error too often committed in works of art, of which even the Greeks have afforded a sufficient number of examples: as Androcydes, the contemporary of Zeuxis, who painted a picture of the six-headed sea-monster Scylla, in which he gave so much care to the *fish* he introduced in the composition, that the monster herself, really the picture, was comparatively unimportant, and Androcydes was ever after ridiculed for having forgotten his art for his appetite, for he was known to have been very fond of fish. Protogenes too, the rival of Apelles, in his celebrated picture of a "Reposing Faun," had introduced a quail so admirably painted, that the first exclamation of the spectator was, "what a beautiful quail!" This so annoyed the great painter, that although the picture was already dedicated, he solicited and obtained leave to efface the offending bird.

Now, it is quite as easy for the ornamental designer to fall into this error as for the painter. His ornaments may become so prominent as completely to obscure the intention or destination of the object he has ostensibly endeavoured to adorn. Every addition by way of ornament should tend only more completely and elegantly to express the designer's purpose: otherwise what is principal is sacrificed to what is but secondary. It is the more or less strict observance of this principle which constitutes good or bad taste,—not the mere character of the design itself; for what might make very handsome carpets, oil cloths, or papers, would in most cases appear ridiculous if used for dresses.

Thus a deteriorated age may use all the elements of the most refined,—possess even the same imitative or mechanical skill in execution,—and yet by a want of discrimination in the application of design, exhibit even a barbarous character in comparison with the design of that period, in which a due attention has been paid to the propriety of application, whether in quantity or quality. And thus a barbarous style of design may, perhaps, more easily arise out of too much ornament than too little.

This, then, is the character of that period of decline which supervened upon the great age of art which attained its highest development in the time of Alexander the Great, and gave evidence of a decay even in the time of Alexander himself, the description of whose funeral, preserved by Diodorus, shows how completely the taste of the Greeks had become orientalized. Sumptuous splendour had taken the place of taste. The decline, however, was very gradual, especially in sculpture. Some of the most prized productions of ancient art are maintained by many critics to belong to a much later age than that of Alexander—as the Laocoon, the Torso of Apollonius, and the Apollo Belvedere—all of them assigned to the time of the Roman emperors. The school of Rhodes was the latest of the Greek schools that maintained a great reputation. Painting seems to have been much less enduring. Mere technical excellencies of art became prominent, and higher qualities were overlooked—*form* became paramount over *essence*. Such was the decline of Grecian art which rapidly supervened on the close of the Alexandrian age. That it never revived from this decline is not remarkable. Greece not only became a Roman province, and lost her artists, but almost every important work that could be moved was transported either to Egypt or to Italy. The Romans were not contented with removing pictures and statues, but the very walls were stripped of their plastering, and the pieces transported in wooden cases to Rome. The spoliations of the Grecian kingdoms of Asia and of Sicily continued uninterruptedly for about two centuries, yet such was the inconceivable wealth of Greece in works of art that Rhodes alone still contained upwards of 3,000 statues, and there could not have been less at Athens, at Olympia, or at Delphi. But all these were nothing compared with the myriads of works, pictures, and statues which were collected together in the public buildings of Rome. Cassiodorus says that Rome was one vast wonder, a statement we can well understand, if we are to judge from the temporary theatre constructed by Scaurus in honour of his ædileship, which he decorated with 3,000 bronze statues.

Considering this unparalleled wealth, then, in works of fine art, it is quite consistent that the Romans should endeavour to decorate their buildings in a style of commensurate splendour and profusion, and thus we find that the most florid examples of purely Greek ornament are plain when compared with the Roman treatment of the same forms, although it is very probable that Greek artists were employed to execute their elaborate designs.

By help of numerous illustrations the lecturer then proceeded to contrast the Greek and Roman orders, and to trace their variations, enrichments, transformations, complications, and confusions during their 'decline and fall.' Examples of ancient ornamental art in the forms of armour, helmets, shields, &c., and of sculpture, candelabra, and other designs, were also referred to and described, with various "preposterous combinations" and "fanciful decorations," deprecated by Roman writers themselves as illustrations of "a beautiful system of ornament run mad—a bed of flowers overrun with weeds." The barbarous forms and colours of specimens of stucco-work and other decorative details from Pompeii were exhibited in justification of such complaints. That even Pompeii, however, a small provincial town, exhibited occasional traces of a magnificent system of decoration, was freely admitted.

Having passed in review every element of classical ornamental art, continued the lecturer, or at least every element of importance, we will now briefly consider what is the exact object of this historical investigation. * * * This is the view with which we study the history of art,—to discriminate and individualize the styles of the various epochs, and, by thus developing distinct characters, to multiply to an equal extent our means of viewing nature, and our powers, consequently, of representation. The real object of historical knowledge, therefore, is not the mere copying what has been done before, but the acquisition of a power which not only supersedes all copying, but which alone will ensure the production of that variety of ornamental design which, the simplest theory must make manifest, is the ostensible effort of every designer.

A knowledge of the various styles not only gives a very great command over the elements of ornamental art, but will enable you to view what comes under your own observation in several distinct lights. For instance, take a walk in one of our fields some summer's day, and make a series of different designs out of what you find there,—say a blade of grass, or a dock-leaf, butter-cups and daisies, an ear of wheat and a poppy or any other simple plant. First throw them together in your own way, and as you would do if you had no knowledge of ornamental design. Then, for example, consider how an Egyptian would have treated these things, and arrange them into a frieze ornament, such as we have many examples of in the temples of Egypt. Then make an attempt at the Doric, and do not forget the anthemion; from that age pass to the Alexandrian, producing a more expansive and rich arrangement, bearing in mind the acanthus; and finally, try the Roman, in which you may put all the gorgeous exuberance of display of which your materials are capable, not forgetting the scroll, and that in both the Alexandrian and Roman styles fabulous animals are admissible. This is only one of a thousand useful experiments or exercises that your historical knowledge will enable you to make in the arrangement of new materials in established forms; and it is a field of enterprise that, without historical knowledge, would be wholly closed to you. I may observe that you will ensure a much greater variety by disposing the same materials in different forms than by arranging different materials in the same forms.

By following out this system, with a thorough knowledge of ornament, you cannot fail to produce variety and beauty at once,—the end of all these studies, and the object of every ornamentist, whatever may be the ultimate destination of his design.

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BRICK DUTIES.—Mr. Peto has presented a petition from Norwich, praying for a reduction of duties on bricks and windows.

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